



FROM PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE TO CIVIC COLLABORATION FOR THE URBAN COMMONS: A CASE STUDY ON THE ROME MUNICIPALITY

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Abstract: There is a very high interest in international literature about the governance of common goods related to a redefinition of representative democracy. Scholars like Sheila Foster and Christian Iaione have proposed new models of governance enhancing the preservation and management of the commons in order to overcome problems and contradictions of complex contemporary cities, such as social exclusion and land privatisation. The aim of this paper is to verify, through a recognition of administrative documents, if in the example of Rome, the political actors, the municipal government, and the civil society, could be able to take part in a collaborative governance inspired reform. To answer this question, the relationship between the policy making process, the economic production model and the normative claims arising from social groups will be investigated. What is emerging is a difficulty of the administration in implementing collaborative principles. This is reflected in the issuance of discordant administrative measures, stemming from problems in relaying to civil society and active citizens the role that these principles assign. The reasons for this mismatching might be identified in the distinctive urban regime of Rome and the political and economic set that fosters social exclusion and does not consider the positive effects and the value of collaborative-oriented policy, enhancing sharing economy and social cohesion. The constant recall in the political discourse of concepts such as common goods, citizen's participation and collaboration values takes the characteristics of a discursive resource, a 'common washing', which institutions and politics seem to re-propose and consolidate the traditional mode of public action, though apparently declaring its inadequacy and ineffectiveness.

Keywords: Municipalities, local government expenditure, public administration, local public service, social and economic stratification

JEL codes: H7, H76, H83, R5, Z13

From common good to common goods

In the last 10 years, participative practices and normative tools fostering collaborative governance of the commons have taken place in Italy and spread out in various urban contexts, such as Bologna, Milan, Turin and Naples. This process is rooted in the fostering of participatory practices starting with the recommendations of UN Agenda 21 of the early 1990s and implemented by the URBAN EU projects that allowed too many participative practices to be trialled in all the major European cities.

It is significant to point out how the political implications of those participatory experiences still have not been fully recognised by local political actors, and they showed their dependence from the political will of the administration, and had difficulty in becoming ordinary institutional policies, lacking in continuity and stability. This process has been clearly described by Putini (2011) as recognition of the participatory budget experiences through a case study involving several Italian cities.

The community commitment on civic collaboration and the caring of the commons have occurred despite this, and the evident difficulties of representative democracy, due to both citizens' disaffection and inadequate effectiveness of local government to manage global challenges (Marchetti 2017). The consequence of this mismatch is a growing distance between the activism in civil society in the collective care of the commons and the response capability of the institution even at local level. The care of the common goods can also include an immaterial field such as knowledge commons, cultural commons, infrastructure commons, and the city as a common itself, especially when they concern the normative claim for a better quality of life and the right to the city arising from social groups (Hess 2008).

Contemporary cities are becoming complex and large entities difficult to define geographically, culturally and from the administrative viewpoint (Castells 2003) since they are increasing their autonomy from central government because of a scale shifting of the governance level. This allows some metropolises to operate as collective actors, able to involve economic, social and political parts of the society and to produce economical change. This process is part of the urban governance which can be defined as a coordination process by which different actors, institutions and social parts, struggle to reach common tasks (Le Galès 2001).

The management of the commons, as well as the involvement of the local communities in the policy and decision making concerning local issues, is a central topic in the collaborative governance theories (Newman et al. 2004) or other models of network-oriented governance (Castells 2003; Ansell & Gash 2007). Besides the analytical and descriptive intention, all the quoted models also share a prescriptive and normative purpose suggesting policy actions to achieve a positive sum resulting in the balance of different society's stakes.

The structural dimension of the collaborative governance theories provides a re-framing of some values and concepts of the interpretation of the social and economic context even if it does not, however, exclude a strong agency dimension (Rein & Schon 1993). The generation of a new policy frame, based on principles of collaboration and on the value of concepts such as common goods and sharing, needs an advocacy coalition able to mobilise consensus, develop narratives, and insert into

policy agendas new definitions of collective problems (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1993). This network of actors plays an important role in the orientation and configuration of citizen participation mechanisms related to the commons, as well as the commitment of the political actors, and its absence or inefficacy can undermine the whole policy process.

The aim of this paper is to introduce an analysis of some processes undertaken by the local authorities of Rome's municipality to verify to what extent the collaborative governance model might fit the Rome situation. This analysis will not consider the whole network of actors of the policy arena, and the analysis will concentrate on the policy outputs as the administrative acts issued from the political actors. The expected result is to outline whether, in the city of Rome, the collaborative governance, even in the lack of a specific regulation, is moving forward through local based administrative initiatives and how they are interacting with the political actors.

The first section outlines the theoretical framework regarding the urban commons and the shifting of citizen participation in Italy developed in the 1990s and the early 2000s to the spreading of regulations for managing the commons. The second section shows some top-down proposals of co-management of urban commons, and their enhancing of the features and characteristics.

The attempt to adopt regulations for civic collaboration and management of the commons on Rome in 2015 and the actions concerning the participatory management of public green areas will be displayed.

The methodological framework is a comparative analysis of second level documentary sources, highlighting differences and correspondences inherent in the legal instruments. The inter-institutional debate through the analysis of political acts concerning their formal characteristics and the internal theoretical and institutional congruence will also be documented. This contribution is part of a broader research concerning the analysis of the context and the actors in the policy arena, to highlight both structural and agency dimensions of the decision model (Rein & Schon 1993). The perceived motivations of the actors might provide useful information on what is at stake and about the possibility of introducing a really innovative policy.

An uncertain answer to the urban crisis

The recent Italian debate about the applications of the theory of commons is polarised in two distinct positions (Mattei 2011; Vitale 2013; Somaini 2015). The most philosophical arguments foresee a radical reformation of the economic models (Hardt & Negri 2009; Mattei 2011). Other approaches assume some more management-like applications to mitigate and reformulate some of the negative features of the *homo oeconomicus* (Pennacchi 2013; Vitale 2013; Sacconi & Ottone 2015). From a convergent definition of the common goods as subject to rivalry but not to excludability, many different theories have been developed in the attempt to apply the related principles to government and administration.

The urban context is a privileged framework for developing commons governance administrative tools because of the concentration of conflicts and contradictions related to the contemporary model of development.

Issues such as the rent and privatisation of land, and the competitive urban development urban paradigm (Brenner & Theodor 2002) have developed. As a consequence, some forms of local resistance claimed a decision-making role and self-determination in the definition of urban policies, whose theoretical assumptions are attributable to Lefebvre (1968) and to the 'right to the city' movement that claimed more power for city inhabitants in shaping urban space (Soja 2010).

These conflicting issues claim to overcome the public/private bipolar paradigm to argument, and, in some cases, experience innovative forms of collaboration with communities, newly articulated subjects demanding a normative redefinition of traditional administrative and representative mechanisms.

Today, however, these models are known mostly for their prescriptive and ideal value since they have only been partly trialled, especially concerning the management of the commons. The result is a difficult and incomplete evaluation of the possible outcomes, especially considering the potential drifting in a collusion and negotiation occurrence and hence a deficit of accountability and legitimacy of the institutions of representative democracy (Moini 2013).

The 1990s, also due to the reform of the Italian law on local autonomy, marked the introduction of significant changes in the structure and role of proximity administrations, further emphasised by the 2001 Constitutional Reform which delegated to local authorities important functions, including economic ones¹.

This era has been characterised by the spreading of participatory practices that, in predominantly consultative and, more rarely, deliberative ways, have been complementary to the work of representative institutions. Participation has landed in Italy and Rome on the basis of international inputs such as the adoption of Agenda 21 and Urban programmes fostering the social and cultural resources of the territories by adopting local and national partnerships such as Neighbourhood Contracts, the PRUSST (Programmi di Recupero Urbano e Sviluppo Sostenibile del Territorio) and the explicit recall of the Law on Local Authorities.

In the city of Rome, there has been a varied diffusion of participatory practices relating to various procedural models and different outputs but essentially sharing a common scope (DieS 2005). The requirement to include popular participation is in the Statute of Roma Capitale², the Technical Implementation Rules of the PRG and the subsequent Regulation on Citizens' Participation in Urban Transformation³. Other institutional experiences are the Citizen Support Framework, Recovery Plans, Territorial Laboratories, Participatory Periphery Forums, Social Autopromotion Programmes and Territory.

Moini (2011) highlighted the danger of a potential collusion of the outcome of these practices by consolidating neo-liberal policies of progressive privatisation of the public sphere. In that vision participation would be functional in the defusion

¹ L. Cost. 18 Oct. 2001, n. 3, *Modifiche al titolo V della parte seconda della Costituzione*.

² Artt. 2, 6, 8, 11, 27.

³ Del. C. C. n. 57, 2 Mar. 2006.

and depoliticization of social conflicts, while the decision-making would be elsewhere in coherence with an accumulation regime ruled by the political class as the big private commercial interests. This argument is also borne out by Ernesto d'Albergo and Giulio Moini in *Il regime dell'Urbe* (2016), which documents the presence in Rome of a functional urban regimen in a narrow circle of interests that excludes the large urban community from decisions and distribution of the economic benefits.

In recent times some initiatives promoted by civil society joined top-down participation. They related to not only urban planning but also the management and the access of physical and immaterial goods by urban communities.

These experiences – including the Retake groups, America cinema association, the School Parents' Association of Di Donato Primary School, Comitato di quartiere (neighbourhood committee) of Torpignattara, initiatives such as Ecomuseum Casilino, the Cinema Impero re-opening campaign, Sangalli Community Value Park, as well as initiatives sponsored by Foundations and other subjects such as the Laboratory for the Governance of the Common Goods of Parco del Centocelle or the public gardens renovation works promoted by the Idea Civis Association – are characterised by their autonomy from historical mobilisations such as those of Social Centres, their procedural novelty and a high degree of cognitive competence.

The argument may be suggested, to be verified, of an ongoing transformation of some social mobilisations into normative claims for a new model of collaborative governance and the creation of new policy arenas with new actors from civil society bringing new kinds of resources. Even in the presence of these new policy issues, the decision making by the local government produced some administrative policy acts that show a substantial misunderstanding of the social claims and gave incoherent answers, probably referring to other rationale that will be shown further in this article.

In other Italian cities, nevertheless, collaborative governance is becoming more than a theoretical model and it is enhancing civic collaboration through the adoption of specific normative tools.

In 2014, the City of Bologna promoted the adoption of the Regulation on Civic Collaboration for the Care and Regeneration of Urban Common Goods to foster citizen participation, applying the subsidiarity principle. Gregorio Arena, chairman of the Labsus association, who coordinated its drafting, had already proposed in 1997 that, with a minimum of regulatory and structural investment, it would be possible to release civic energies otherwise crushed by the public/private duopoly (Arena 1997).

The Bologna Regulation inspired many other Italian cities, 121 up to today, to adopt such a normative tool. This tool allows the creation of administrative acts of cooperation between private subjects and the municipal institution, in order to regulate the limits and the possibilities of taking care of the common goods.

In the regulation, citizens' participation is mentioned in many sections, both to settle disputes and to determine decision-making procedures regarding the citizens' actions. The regulation does not state participatory procedures but frequently mentions social inclusion, and it can be inferred that the adoption of accessible and open procedures can theoretically guarantee its legitimacy and accountability.

The regulation is part of a broader policy to enhance civic collaboration fostered by the City of Bologna: Collaborare is Bologna, made of various initiatives such as Community (Comunità); an area of the Iperbole Civic Network (Rete Civica Iperbole), to share common social practices; a Civic Participation Festival (Festa della Partecipazione civica); the Urban Co-Design Laboratories; and CO-Bologna, which is part of 'CO-city', a research-action project aimed to test, adapt and develop, in the urban context, the principles of services design and governance of commons stated by Elinor Ostrom.

CO-Bologna is a project of the Monte di Bologna and Ravenna Banking Foundation and the Municipality of Bologna coordinated by LabGov – Laboratory for the governance of commons – a project of LUISS University of Rome. A complex network of actors appeared in the policy arena of Bologna, constituting an advocacy coalition where political, administrative, expert, entrepreneurial and social actors joined together to achieve the policy result.

Nevertheless it is important to be aware that there are many possible different outcomes of the regulation and not all of them are desirable: on the one hand there is citizens' pedagogical action, but there might be also institutional brokerage, the consolidation of electoral consensus for local politicians, and drift in conflicts defusion and stakes depoliticization (Kickert et al. 1997; Moini 2011).

The Municipality of Rome and the common goods: a complicated relationship

Following the adoption of the Bologna Regulation in May 2014 and its further spreading, the Rome municipality carried out a number of normative tools to deal with the care of commons.

The Mayor Marino Executive board began to regulate citizen participation in the management of the commons from 2015, in discontinuity with former Mayor Alemanno's administration.

Some of them will be consider here to suggest ideas for further analysis. The selected examples have been chosen because of their common scope concerning a cooperative and creative use of public spaces. They belong to different policy kinds and the aim of this recognition is to compare the different institutional approaches undertaken by the same administration to similar issues. The topics that will be covered in the following sub-sections are: the approval process of the Regulation for the Management of Commons, the Guidelines for the Adoption of Green Areas and the Guidelines for Adoption of Dog Sites.

The history of the Regulation for the Managing of the Commons in Rome

On April 30, 2015, the Municipal Executive Board of Rome deliberated the Resolution no. 30 proposed by Alderman Paolo Masini, 'Policy guidelines for a Regulation for the collaboration between administration and citizens on the management and regeneration of urban commons'⁴.

Following this resolution, an interdepartmental table coordinated by the Labsus association in the person of Prof. Gregorio Arena was set up, with the purpose of drafting a regulation. The working group, which included a broad staff from various departments and offices of Rome's municipality, met for the first time on June 15th for a total of five meetings. Due to the resignation of Mr. Masini on July 29, 2015, the approval of the regulation was suspended even though a definitive draft had been accomplished.

On March 13, 2015, the Movimento 5 Stelle councillors submitted to the municipal council a resolution on the approval of a regulation for the shared management of Urban Commons between the municipality and citizens. The resolution began a regular session for approval through the councils of the sub-municipal districts in August 2015. The subsequent ratification by the Municipal Council was interrupted by the early dissolution of the City Council.

The *Sinistra e Libertà* councillors, a far left-wing party, also announced through a press release that they had filed a proposal for a regulation to be approved by the City Council on July 29th, 2015.

While the draft produced by the institutional working table was inspired by the model of the regulation being approved in Turin, the regulations proposed by M5S and SEL have been the source of inspiration for the Regulation of the Municipality of Chieri, near Turin.

Referring to a comparison between the various models advanced by Giglioni (2014), based on seven parameters (principles, subjects, organisational implications, governance model, the importance of private assets, support tools and warranties) it is possible to compare the models proposed by the institutional working table and the M5S.

The M5S version of the regulation, proposed by a political minority, has a different value, reflected in its content and settings, compared to the version drafted by the institutional table. However, considering also this asymmetry, it is useful to compare the two proposals even if neither of them has ever been put into practice and can therefore be evaluated in light of its outcomes.

The purpose of the comparison is therefore to stimulate a theoretical reflection on how and if such a tool can be useful in resolving some of the problems of management, coexistence and democratisation of public life in Rome.

Although both outline the same general principles, in the regulations proposed by the institutional table (henceforth RTI), Active Citizens are considered

⁴ Prot. N. 12123, 30 Apr. 2015.

individual citizens, associations and business companies as well, while the regulation proposed by the M5S group (hence in then R5S) introduces a new subject: the reference community.

In accordance with the Municipality of Chieri Regulation, the reference community is “a collective subject that cannot be attributed to the formal groups already known, so that the regulation needs to provide for them a special rule. This is a very important innovation affecting the delicate relationship between a collective subject, associated subjects and third parties for whom it is not clear if a municipal regulation, in the absence of a legislative provision, might be adequate in terms of legitimacy” (Giglioni 2014). The two regulations look similar to the profile of the organisational model which in both cases establishes a central liaison office.

In RTI is mentioned the need of a coordination with local districts, unlike in the R5S. This centralised setting is likely to be linked to the central input involving only departmental staff while declaring the intention to get advice from sub-municipal districts for the final version (Arena 2011).

Both models are based on agreements with the social parts (*di collaborazione* – collaboration – in RTI and *di condivisione* – sharing – in the R5S) which may also be of an informal nature in the regulation of the R5S (art. 11, paragraph 3, where it is possible to undertake care interventions or regeneration, thus legitimising a tacit consent from the municipality). In the R5S model, the involvement of reference communities in decision-making and planning is also mentioned, prescribing an enlargement of the process to a policy making tool.

Another difference concerns the extension of the measures to private property, considered by RTI and excluded from the R5S. RTI is also more limiting about economic support, providing exemption from local taxes for public utility initiatives, small commercial forms of self-financing, support by resources by municipal offices and free use of spaces, fees and utilities. In the R5S, however, financial support is provided through the refunding of technical, professional and advisory costs. The R5S excludes any possible commercial or business relapse while this possibility does not appear foreclosed by RTI. This element is functional to the different vision of support, which in the R5S is geared towards the delivery of public contributions, while in the RTI it provides forms of self-sustainability.

The last parameter, the guarantees, is another element of diversity. In the RTI there is an optional dispute settlement committee and instead, in the R5S, the extrajudicial procedure is a matter for recourse to ordinary civil and administrative jurisdictions. Although there is an appreciable attempt to offer guarantees of effectiveness to the participatory procedures of commons, even in this case, there may be doubts regarding “the legitimacy of using the regulatory source to affect access to justice” (Giglioni 2014).

In conclusion, the two models of regulation differ in many aspects, affecting their effectiveness to induce changes in urban space policies or in the management and provision of public services.

Following the inauguration of Mayor Virginia Raggi in June 2016, the Regulation for the Management of Common Goods did not resume the legislative process despite the fact that it was generically mentioned in her election manifesto. A more

accurate reference is in the Guidelines for Digital Agenda for Rome Capitale approved by a municipal executive board resolution⁵. In the actions to be developed during the period July 2016–December 2017, the Digital Agenda includes “the definition and adoption of a Regulation for the Managing of the Commons to enable social innovation, also in connection with the Rome Smart City program”⁶, while in the lines 2018–2021 is stated the starting of the experimentation of the Common Goods Regulation.

The Rome II District Council with resolution no. 7 of November 9, 2016, issued a Regulation Scheme for the shared management of common goods based on the draft of the Working Table of the Mayor Marino. The regulation was, however, rejected by the Capitoline Council that established the district lacks competence over a municipal matter.

Worth mentioning also is the initiative of the right-wing councillors, who on May 25, 2017 submitted a proposal for a Regulation for Collaboration between Citizens and Capitoline Administration for Regeneration and Management of the commons and urban spaces of Rome as an Administrative Barter. This proposal, while largely preserving the Bologna Regulation model, introduces the element of the administrative barter whose relevance in the context of the subsidiarity principle has been criticised by Labsus as “administrative barter, beside any doubt about its legitimacy, has nothing to do with shared administration. It engages in legal relationships that are asymmetrical, with one party that demands and the other that is obliged without any freely constituted agreement, it does not create social trust but only dependence and subordination” (Gigliani 2016).

On May 26, 2017, the Democratic Party councillors submitted a proposal for the adoption of the regulation on cooperation between citizens and administration for the care, shared management and regeneration of urban commons substantially similar to the regulation adopted by the Municipality of Brescia. Also, in this model of regulation, the collaboration is assimilated to the administrative barter, while the right to grant the agreements with the social part (*patti di collaborazione*) is attributed exclusively to the Municipal executive board leaving to the administrative officers only the enquiry. This approach creates a possible form of ambiguity in respect of the principle of distinction between the political and administration domain functions.

To conclude, the debate over the adoption of the Regulation for the Management of Common Goods is, to date, extremely active in Rome and concerns all the political forces. The focus on the issue of citizenship involvement in the management of heritage and common spaces is therefore transversal, indicating both the expectations on this innovative tool to solve some of the city’s historical problems, and a rhetorical use of expressions as commons or shared administration. In addition, especially in the proposals formulated by the political minorities, some context prerequisites for the adoption of the regulation (the ability of the administration to interact with the demands of citizens, mutual trust) may appear as the postulates

⁵ Deliberation of Mayor (Memoria di Giunta Capitolina) on 14 Oct 2016.

⁶ Deliberation of Mayor (Memoria di Giunta Capitolina) *Linee Guida per l’Agenda Digitale di Roma Capitale*, allegato A, par. 7 *Open Government*, comma 10.

of its action, generating the perception of a misguidance to the possibility of introducing shared and collaborative administrative elements and of a mere replication of models borrowed from other contexts.

Guidelines for the adoption of green areas and dog parks

Maintenance and management of public green areas are among the dominant issues in urban commons management policies. There are many examples of metropolises issuing management policies with proven results such as Paris, with the *Main Vert* programme of shared gardens, and New York that has for a long time institutionalised the Community Garden through the Green Thumb permanent programme. The reasons for the dissemination are not only in the saving benefits of maintenance but especially in the inclusion of resident communities in the caring and managing of public space (Coppola 2012).

Sometimes those initiatives have increased community engagement in some strategic decisions in local policies regarding use of space, for example subtracting some shared management areas to building projects or changing destinations responding to commercial interests (Ostrom 2000; Rosol 2010).

This subsection will present some strategies of Rome's municipality to verify whether they are aligned with the principle of broadening of the governance of the commons.

Also due to the urban sprawl in the suburbs and the urban planning programmes, Rome's urban green areas are steadily increasing. The Environment Protection Office (*Dipartimento Tutela Ambientale*) has undergone an increasing reduction in human resources and budgets against a gradual increase of green areas, which peaked in the mid-1990s, recording a steady positive trend with an average increase until 2010 of 58 hectares per year (Rome Capital 2012).

The shrinkage of the gardening staff, which ranged from 1,800 employees in 1980 to the current 540 (of which only 250 have technical and operational duties) can be traced back to the neo-liberalisation process that has invested in Roman policies since the beginning of the 1990s. In the case of the Gardening Office, this resulted in a progressive outsourcing of green maintenance services to private enterprise.

This management model has caused various types of maladministration, creating a collusive fabric between administrators and business entities, and documented by the criminal investigation on 2013, popularly known as *Mafia Capitale*, which involved many officers, politicians and enterprises in the procurement of maintenance of green areas. The difficulties related to our analysis concern the low level of maintenance of green spaces which can also be attributed to some endogenous features of Roman urbanisation, such as mistakes in territorial planning and the high rate of informal developments.

In 1995, Mayor Rutelli introduced some initiatives to open to private actors the management of public green areas, due to economic motivations. Admitting the inability of the municipality to cope with adjustments and maintenance, different

kind of partnerships were proposed: the *Punti Verdi Qualità* involving great business companies; the *Punti Verdi Infanzia* with the owners of small amusement parks and carousels for children; and the Citizen Green Points, *Punti Verdi Cittadini*. The latter appeared as a cost-free initiative for the administration addressed to non-profit associations and allowing citizens to sign a convention for the caring and maintenance of a green area.

In 2014, with Resolution No. 207, Mayor Marino issued some guidelines on the adoption of green areas of Rome Capital to be delivered to the Environmental Protection Department – Civil Protection. The areas currently adopted are 101, more than half of them following the issuance of the guidelines.

Although there are some references to horizontal subsidiarity and collaboration, the proposed model differs significantly from the Regulation for the Management of Commons.

The guideline's synthesis is: "A single citizen or an association undertakes, through the elaboration of a special commitment, to maintain a green urban area adopted in accordance with specific technical-operational standards unilaterally defined by the competent municipal office (horizontal green maintenance and/or cleaning and/or eventual custody) for a fixed period, all without financial burden on the Administration".

This points to the asymmetry of the relationship between administration and citizens of the agreement, voluntarily signed by the proposing citizens. The role of the municipality, which benefits from a service, acts as regulatory imposition and lacks any kind of encouragement or support of the adopting citizens.

In examples from other cities, generally quoted in the guidelines as "a model already partially experienced in the past, also in other urban contexts of various sizes and consistency similar to the adoption of green areas" in New York, Paris or Bologna, the municipality provides economic support to ensure the sustainability of the initiative as well as material support by means of funds and facilitations to self-financing. The guidelines mention the possibility of a direct connection and therefore support by the Gardening Office, but this function is not present in the agreements subsequently stipulated.

In the conventions signed thereafter, the adopting person must obtain an insurance for carrying out the voluntary activities and any possible exclusive use of the area is forbidden, except in the case of a specific authorisation.

A similar issue is in the Guidelines on the adoption of Rome's green areas in the charge of the Department of Environmental Protection issued as a Municipal Council Resolution no. 306 on 17 Oct 2014, which norms the adoption of dog parks. These guidelines differ partly from the previous ones because they involve pre-established and restricted communities that have a strong motivation to maintain a specific area. For this reason, they are subject to a strict technical regulation motivated by health reasons that cannot be negotiated.

In conclusion, it is possible to define such agreements as partnerships for the management of the commons, which involve, for the communities, the adoption of a public green space and its effective availability, and for the municipality, maintenance and economic saving. At the top level, the stakes for the community can

include the possibility of direct interactions with the Municipality and the offices as a recognised social subject, thus acquiring negotiating prerogatives. The transformative potential of this policy is therefore of an indirect nature, since in the normative premise there is no postulate of any possibility of co-administering the green areas adopted, beside the free provision of services on behalf of the administration.

It is significant that, in a document presented by Aldermen Estella Marino, member of Mayor Marino executive board, at the Democratic Party Roma Programming Conference of 28/29 November 2014, the new urban governance model, of which the measures previously examined are part, is presented as the creation of “active citizenship paths as social inclusion opportunities that promote interpersonal relationships, knowledge and the enhancement of the urban environment, developing moments of sociality and of meeting; [...] safeguard and re-qualifying of the territory through processes of self-management of commons to counteract the effects of the economic crisis; stimulating and increasing the sense of belonging to the community by satisfying social demand for ‘landscape’, ‘environment’, ‘sociality’, recovering both public spaces with social, cultural or environmental goals, improving the aesthetic, both the knowledge and traditions of the rural culture of the area”.

The civil society activism, with its cognitive resources and knowledge of the territory, urban green areas and social context, finds no response or possibility of formal interaction within the actions described, without generating any transformative outcome on the redefinition of green management policies.

Since 2010, the Zappata Romana website has listed Roman community gardens. To date, 102 community gardens and 31 spot gardens are mapped. The map is not wholly accurate because it is generated by user notifications but does testify to the great vitality and attention given to this phenomenon. It is advisable to observe, in an analysis of District (Municipio) Roma V, the reported areas differ from those officially adopted. None of the seven officially adopted green areas have been censored, while the map presents 21 gardening experiences or collective management in other informal contexts. A possible deduction is the presence of parallel levels, and that normative action, method and substance has not collided with the needs expressed by the community.

The Mayor Raggi administration kept a continuity of stance although mentioning the need to “provide forms of concession so that associations and local communities can manage public spaces observing the subsidiarity principle” in the Electoral Manifesto. In the Guidelines for the Regulation of the Green and Landscape of Rome Capital issued as Municipal Council Resolution No. 66 of Apr 14, 2017, there is a reference to the adoption of green areas that may be given in adoption to citizens and associations according to the procedures subsequently indicated by the Municipality without any form of support, whilst engaging the citizens with respect to specific standards and criteria.

With a subsequent decision issued on August 3, 2017, the Department of Environmental Protection establishes a procedure for voluntary, occasional, public gardening activities ruled by citizens and associations, subordinating it to an authorisation released by the municipal offices. Volunteers are required to obtain an insurance at their own expense with a minimum cap, in case of death or disability,

of 100,000 Euro per individual and 300,000 for third party liability. This element, lacking a regulation for the adoption of green areas following the guidelines, points out the administration's stance, in line with the ambivalent attitude of previous administrators toward citizens' participation: emphasised in the declarations of intent and disregard of the practices, in coherence with the traditional administrative system. The result is an incremental policy, that leaves mostly unchanged the relations between the actors and in a zero-sum game, and excludes some important stakeholders, as the community gardeners, from the policy arena.

Conclusion

Through analysis of the participatory policies of the past, and in consideration of the variety and dissemination of shared management experiences of public and private spaces and the initiatives put in place by the administration of Rome to answer to these normative claims, the question arises whether they are heterogeneous episodes or part of a hypothetical path, of which it is necessary to investigate its sense and direction.

Some recent policies attempted to answer the calls for the widening of citizen management of commons using ways that are not always consistent with the claims of social actors. It would therefore be useful to investigate the existence of a continuity – substantial, methodological or value – between the participation experienced in Rome and the practices of managing urban commons such as the various editions of the Regulation on Collaboration between citizens and administration for the care and regeneration of urban commons, then to evaluate the outputs, the actual potentialities of the various commons management formulas, the democratisation and the impact on social inequality.

The small common asset management practices discussed here could, in theory, be placed in an ideal continuity with the international and national guidelines, such as Agenda 21, the White Paper on Governance in the EU of 2001, Aalborg Commitments to which the City of Rome has acceded in 2006 and art. 118 of the Italian Constitution introducing the principle of subsidiarity.

However, from the analysis of the documents, the difficulty of the administration in implementing these principles is evident. This difficulty is reflected in the issuance of discordant administrative measures, stemming from problems in relaying to civil society and active citizens the role that these principles assign.

Social actors historically involved in co-management or self-management of green areas or public spaces have generated effective practices in informal ways, sometimes assisted by special concessions or trusts by the Administration. This regime was thus a compensatory policy, deterring transparent and certain administrative practices by consolidating a negotiating participation which favoured actors with strategic skills in dealing with politicians, to the detriment of less organised entities.

This element is also reflected in the issue of the municipal heritage which has been the object of the Guidelines for the Reallocation of the Unavailable Heritage

in a concession emanating from Mayor Marino in 2015 with the Municipal Resolution n. 140. Again, a reorganisation of the criteria for the concession of municipal assets was attempted, towards a consolidated negotiating practice which caused wastes and inefficiencies. However, this intervention caused some unforeseen or unwanted consequences. After the resignation of Mayor Marino in late 2015, the following Government Commissioner's administration which ruled the city until the new elections and some judicial decision of the Governmental Court of Audits, put the Roman administration under investigation of damage to the treasury. This stressed the need for management subject to economic criteria despite the vocation to the social use of the assets concerned.

Also, in the analysis of Resolution no. 140, there is a clear contradiction between the mentioning of principles related to subsidiarity or formal adherence to shared management criteria and the ambiguous political stance which denies the possibility of widening and restructuring the field of actors involved.

As shown in Rome's case, concepts like commons and shared administration, even if widely used in political and institutional language, are having a hard time in influencing administrative action. Their constant recall takes on the characteristics of a discursive resource, a 'common washing', which institutions and politics seem to re-propose and consolidate the traditional mode of public action, though apparently declaring its inadequacy and ineffectiveness. Other global cities are improving policies for the commons which also have positive benefit on the economic development. The example of Barcelona, which is promoting a radical approach to the urban commons, shows a more coherent commitment of the local authorities to the participation issues. In Barcelona, the City Council addressed specific policies to enhance citizen participation and to solve some historical problems of the city such as the lack of public housing through co-housing initiatives, or re-use of public spaces, or even involving citizens in establishing cooperative and sustainable solutions in order to increase the electric power generation capacity of the city (Iaione 2017). It is also worth mentioning the case of Seoul, which has implemented since 2014 the Sharing City Project, with the aim of creating social, economic and environmental values. This municipal policy has also been conceived to involve private enterprises and to commit them to collaborative values (Foster & Iaione 2016). Those initiatives, designed as a form of cooperation which includes both sharing of resources subject to rivalry to avoid scarcity, and collaboration around commons resources to generate abundance, are an example of governance with a collaborative mark.

According to Le Galès (2001) urban governance can be defined as a process of participation and consultation involving all the actors on the urban scene in the attempt to build a collective actor able to develop attitudes and peculiarities as competitive advantages among other cities. In applying this urban governance definition to the case of Rome it might be inferred that the local urban regime does not have a special interest in developing collaborative strategies to respond to global challenges (D'Albergo & Moini 2015). This might be configured as an ineffective governance, since it excludes a significant part of the population from the opportunities and the benefits of the economic growth connected to sharing economy and social inclusion.

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